



**The representation of women with a distinct focus
on the main character Beth Heke in the movie
"Once were warriors"**

Toni Rudat

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 2,3, RWTH Aachen University, course: Filming New Zealand, 11 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: New Zealand „The Wonder Country“ that is the title of Margaret McClures book published in Auckland 2004. In her book McClure describes the fascinating landmarks and tourist sites of New Zealand.

In contrast to that Lee Tamahori designs a rather sober picture of New Zealand and its aboriginal citizens descendants respectively, the Maori, with his film adaption of Allan Duffs „Once were warriors“. Already in 1990 Duffs novel was traded as highly controversial and bestselling. Tamahoris adaption of this novel won more than 15 international film awards. The seven-man family is about to collapse since the father Jake „The Muss“ Heke is alcohol addicted and once again lost his job at the beginning of the movie. Since eighteen years he constantly beats up his wife Beth Heke when he is drunk. Although the two youngest children seem to be untouched by the miserable family background, the eldest son Nig joins a gang. His younger brother Marc, also known as Boogie, becomes re-offended when he is caught prising a car again. In the course of his misbehaviour he is sent to an approved school. Just the oldest daughter, Grace, seems to have a future since she succeeds in school and writes short stories. However, as it ought to turn out the family is shattered by the rape of Grace and her suicide. Not until its revealed that a friend of Jake, Bully, who calls himself Grace' uncle, raped Grace Beth draws the conclusion to leave Jake. The movie was published in Germany under the name „Die letzte Kriegerin“ with a distinct focus on the main character Beth Heke. It was often discussed whether this titel fits the movie and hits the essence of the film. Therefore this paper concentrates on the representation of women within the movie to answer the question wether the title „Die letzte Kriegerin“ matchs the impression the viewers get of Beth Heke. Therefore it seems to be indispensable to take a close look at the characters development of Beth. Moreover it seems to be evident to have a look at Grace and her life respectively her perspective and her individual conveniences in comparison to the lifes of her older brothers Nig and Marc. Finally it should succeed to answer the question why it was somehow necessary that Grace had to comit suicide before Beth left Jake. Moreover the circumstances of the different lifes have to be illuminated. Finally it should succeed to state the reason why Duff portrayed the Maori community the was he did.

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